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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 9/17/82	
TO: DDI			
ROOM NO.		BUILDING	
REMARKS: The attached, with my note to Ted Atkeson, is self-explanatory. I strongly recommend serious pursuit of the objectives in this proposal. We will support in any way possible.			
FROM: H. F. Hutchinson, VC/NIĆ			
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION	

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

(57)

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

DDI #7501-82
16 September 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM : Major General Edward B. Atkeson, USA
National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose ForcesSUBJECT : ☐ Proposal for Combat Data Compilation

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1. We have had a breathtaking run of small off-line wars this year. Iran-Iraq, Falklands, Lebanon and Afghanistan are only the most prominent. My observation has been that while much Community analysis has been serviceable, it has suffered somewhat from a lack of context--the sort of thing one gets from having at his fingertips a relevant data base on past conflicts.

2. I am taken by the attached proposal ☐ for assemblage of selected data on recent wars which might provide us with the sort of historical "ground truth" needed by analysts. While the price is not cheap ☐ I propose we take him on as a service of common concern to the Community. I suspect that the wargaming community will also find utility in the results just as we will for unilateral analysis. Recommend your approval in principle, subject to availability of funds.

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Edward B. Atkeson

Attachment:

☐ Concept Paper -
Studies of Contemporary
War Experience

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APPROVED:

I like the project. It is not the sort of thing we should do here. It is the sort of thing we should support. The D.I. (SOVA OSMA and OGI) should do this project. Please approve with being and

Fred

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H. F. Hutchinson, Jr. - Acting C/NIC

Date

STUDIES OF CONTEMPORARY WAR EXPERIENCE

 Concept Paper

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Objective

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proposes to gather available informational and statistical data relating to contemporary and recent combat from major sources in order to: (1) assemble a data bank focussing on experience of significance for US defense planning, and (2) develop an organization, system and procedures to facilitate continual and prompt collection of such data regarding any new conflict occurring in any part of the world.

Background

The last decade has seen a number of armed conflicts, ranging from guerrilla actions to large-scale wars. The³ list includes the armed forces of many nations -- Ethiopia, Somalia, Rhodesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, and Guatemala are among them.

While the United States has not been actively involved in war since the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam, US weapons have been supplied to some of the warring nations. Combatants -- sometimes the same ones -- have also been using weapons of recent manufacture by the Soviet Union and by other weapons-producers. These conflicts present excellent opportunities to study the performance of modern weapons, their tactical use, and the techniques of warfare in environments that are unlike that which is the milieu of most contemporary war plans, but environments in which the US, nonetheless, could be involved.

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The United States has maintained, and maintains, observers in some combat areas, and US intelligence sources undoubtedly have acquired and will continue to acquire a considerable amount of information. There is in addition information available in open sources, and from direct approaches to participants in some of these experiences.

However, there is no procedure or methodology for collecting information at an unclassified or relatively low level of classification (SECRET or below) suitable for immediate, intensive, and comprehensive analysis. Such analysis could provide insights into weapons performance, combat capabilities of the active participants, and effectiveness of various tactics, techniques, and expedients in differing combat circumstances and environments. And, unless there are special collaborative circumstances such as mark the relationship of the Israeli Armed Forces to those of the United States, useful data that could be collected during a conflict may no longer be available after the conflict is finished. Details of the Ethiopian-Somalian conflict, and the current Iranian-Iraqi war, may fall into this latter category.

What seems to be needed, therefore, is a means for determining what items of data suitable for low-classification analysis can be usefully compiled during an ongoing conflict, a formulation of means and procedures to collect and classify such data, and a methodology for beginning useful analyses of the data with a minimum of delay.

Had such a system been available in 1973, it would have been possible to:

- Assess Iraqi combat effectiveness promptly;
- Discover almost immediately a fallacy in WSG 237 that resulted in an erroneous assessment of antitank weapons performance;
- Discover almost immediately that October War attrition rates were no greater than World War II rates.

Availability in the 1980s will permit:

- Improved assessments of likely outcome of potential wars;

- Determination of the relevance of weapons effectiveness to possible war in Europe;
- A basis for improving or validating current attrition or other simulation methodologies;
- Facilitation of early application of lessons learned.

Concept

In order to understand thoroughly and to exploit most fully the combat information that is and can be available on ongoing conflicts, it is necessary to approach the problem in the manner of both an historian and an operations research analyst, analyzing both recent and current conflicts, selecting the most important bits of data, and seeking out their importance and their significance for the future, while developing an organization, system, and methodology that can be immediately utilized to collect data, and initiate analysis of that data, whenever a new conflict occurs.

[] proposes to identify and gather data concerning those conflicts within the past decade (including ongoing conflicts) which by reason of location, weapons, tactics, or political implications, are of most significance for US defense planning. STAT

Data thus gathered would be assembled, evaluated, and organized for ready retrieval in categories of continuing interest or potential value to the Department of Defense, to accomplish the two purposes of this research, as follows:

a. Using as a guide the items identified as essential for combat analysis [] STAT

[] and generally accepted by operations planners as elements that should be considered in combat analysis, [] would seek data from all available sources, including official US sources to the extent the client wishes and they may be open to properly qualified [] staffers. STAT

b. Detailed plans would be developed for carrying out continual collection and organization of data suitable for analysis from any new conflict which may break out in any part of the world.

The work on this project would be undertaken as a continuing program, starting with a selected group of conflicts and adding each year to the data collected other conflicts that are of particular interest. The first year the system will be set up, and in subsequent years the same organizational and procedural patterns will be followed.

It is envisaged that the first year's work will proceed in the following steps:

-I. Selection of combat experience to be studied.

This will be done in consultation with the client.

-II. Tentative formulation of categories of data to be sought.

[] list of combat factors will provide a basis for seeking advice from other organizations and agencies regarding the formulation of a suitable data base.

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-III. Compilation of data.

All available sources for data with significance for this project will be exploited, including:

- Local participants at all levels;
- On the spot observation of the combat areas;
- Journalists assigned to observe the conflict;
- Official US observers
- Published, unclassified, reports, studies, and analyses;
- Classified reports and other materials in official sources.

-IV. Organization of data.

The information assembled from these sources will be carefully studied and those items that fit into categories identified in Task II will be put in those categories.

-V. Organization and system for future data collection.

Recommendations will be submitted to the client on the basis of work performed in prior tasks.

-VI. Report.

The data bank resulting from Task IV will constitute the principal report of the project. For each conflict, [] will also prepare a brief narrative describing in general

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terms the course of the action during the period that is represented in the data base. Recommendations for data analysis will be included.

The same general procedure will be followed in subsequent years, with first priority being given to any new conflicts which break out during the period.

This concept will not only assure a capability to initiate prompt data collection for analysis from any new conflict, it will provide a rich and growing data base for analysis of all recent conflicts.

Work Plan and Budget

A detailed work plan will have to be elaborated in consultation with the client or clients, and the budget will depend upon the nature of this work plan. [] tentatively estimates that a modest program, but effective enough for evaluation, can be conducted on a budget []

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